

## Two steps to protect babies from whooping cough

**A serious illness:** Whooping cough (pertussis) is a serious illness in infants that can result in hospitalization and death. Children younger than 6 months old are at highest risk. In the United States (US), almost 80% of babies 6 months old or younger with whooping cough are admitted to the hospital.<sup>1</sup>

**A continuing upsurge in whooping cough:** In 2004, the number of reported cases of whooping cough reached a 45-year high.<sup>2-4</sup> Reported cases of whooping cough are highest among these groups: infants too young to be vaccinated, adolescents, and adults. A study has shown that babies often get whooping cough from their mothers or other family members.<sup>5</sup> The protection provided by childhood pertussis vaccines “wears off” in adolescents and adults, who may then spread the infection to infants. But there is a way to protect your baby.



### Take 2 steps to protect your baby

**Vaccination for children:** Today, children in the US are routinely vaccinated with a combination vaccine for diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis (DTaP). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination at 2, 4, 6, 15-18 months, and 4-6 years of age.<sup>6</sup>

**Vaccination for adolescents and adults:** Protection from pertussis “wears off” so predictably that, in 2005, the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices voted to recommend a single booster of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine for adolescents and adults (11-64 years of age) who have close contact with infants less than 12 months of age.<sup>6,7</sup>

Please talk to your family doctor about immunizations to protect your baby from pertussis.

**References:** 1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Rate of hospitalizations for pertussis among infants aged <6 months—United States, 1994-1998 and 1999-2003. *MMWR*. 2005;54:1027. 2. CDC. Summary of notifiable diseases, United States 1994. *MMWR*. 1995;43:68-77. 3. CDC. Summary of notifiable diseases—United States, 2003. *MMWR*. 2005;52:69-77. 4. CDC. Final 2004 reports of notifiable diseases. *MMWR*. 2005;54:770-780. 5. Bisgard KM, Pascual FB, Ehresmann KR, et al. Infant pertussis: who was the source? *Pediatr Infect Dis J*. 2004;23:985-989. 6. CDC. Recommended childhood and adolescent immunization schedule—United States, 2006. *MMWR*. 2006;54:Q1-Q4. 7. Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice recommends adult vaccination with new tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis vaccine (Tdap) [press release]. CDC; November 9, 2005.